Income Maintenance Advisory Committee
Division of Economic Support
M I N U T E S
Thursday, February 21, 2002
GEF III, Room 041
Madison, Wisconsin
1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

County Attendees: **Jackie Bennett**, Racine Co. WDC, **Joanne Faber**, Washington Co. DSS, **Liz Green**, Dane Co. DHS, **Jane Huebsch,** Marathon Co. DSS, **Ed Kamin**, Tri-Chair**,** Kenosha Co. DHS, **John Rathman,** Outagamie Co., **Sue Schmitz**, Waukesha Co., **Sheryl Siegl**, Winnebago Co. DHS.

State Attendees: **Rick Zynda**, Tri-Chair, DWD/DWS/ONSPI, **Mike McKenzie,** DWD/DWS/ONSPI, **Sara Pynenberg**, DWD/DWS/ONSPI, **John Haine,** DHFS/DHCF/BHCE, **Amy Mendel-Clemens,** DWD/BPS/Call Center, **Jill Jokela,** DWD/ASD/BITS, **Marilyn Rudd,** DWD/DWS/ONSPI, **Kathleen Luedtke,** DHFS/DSL/SSI-CTS, **Diane Parduhn,** DWD/PBS/MADRO, **Dave Hippler,** DWD/DWS/ONSPI, **Diane Parduhn,** DWD/PBS/MADRO, **Kathy Gugel**, DHFS/DHCF/BHCE

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS

December 2001 and January 2002 minutes were approved with no comments or changes.

John Haine handed out information on the Communities Connecting Coverage conference that will be held in early March at the Monona Terrace in Madison.

March IMAC monthly meeting canceled due to conflict of another meeting for committee members.

(***Note:*** *Minutes are available on-line on the Internet Partner Page –* http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dws/w2/imac/minutes/default.htm.

Minutes for 2002 will be accessed on the Internet Partner Page – http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dws/w2/imac/minutes/2002/default.htm.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

IMAC and W-2 Contract Implementation Committee (CIC):

Ed Kamin shared that IMAC and CIC communication can be accomplished through the membership of some of the IMAC members on CIC.

Farm Bill Update:

Rick Zynda presented update and handout on the Farm Bill. On February 13, 2001 the full Senate passed the farm bill on a 58-40 vote. The Senate added three Food Stamp Program (FSP)amendments that expands benefits and boosts the Senate bill's total new FSP spending by $8.9 billion. The Senate's bill also included numerous other benefit change provisions, as well as many administrative simplifications. The Senate bill moved immediately to a conference committee of the House and Senate to work out a compromise of the House and Senate versions of the bill. The House version, passed last fall, contained approximately $3.4 billion in new FS funding.

FS Error Reduction Grants:

Mike McKenzie explained that a letter had been sent to each county/tribe asking for proposals for a Food Stamp Error Reduction Initiative. Each county/tribal proposal is limited to no more than $25,000. Total dollars available for the initiative is $278,000. Mike explained that 34 proposals were received by the February 18, 2002 deadline. The "Error Reduction Workgroup" will review each proposal. The workgroup will decide which county plans best meet the established guidelines. Points will be awarded for different identifiers within each plan. Each county will receive a ranking of their plan. The USDA/Food and Nutrition Service must also approve the plans relative to the federal requirements for this project. Local agencies will then be notified.

SENIORCARE UPDATE

John Haine gave an update on SeniorCare stating that planning stages are moving forward.

Original discussion was held on using an interactive Internet application. Due to budget constraints and the limited amount of time available before implementation, creating an interactive Internet application will not be feasible for SeniorCare at implementation.

The plan is to move forward on a centralized application process with a scanable paper application. At the present time it is still undecided where the Central Application Processing Operation (CAPO) will be housed. Both public and private workers will be utilized.

The role of county workers on SeniorCare will be to refer clients to Aging Networks for information on SeniorCare.

DHFS plans that SeniorCare applications will be available in July, 2002, with seniors having benefit cards in hand on September 1, 2002.

CARETAKER SUPPLEMENT (CTS)

Kathleen Luedtke of DHFS/DSL/SSI-CTS provided a project update. Kathy explained that the CTS CARES conversion went well.

For the last six to eight months there have been approximately 11,300 kids and 5,800 parents on CTS. Since the CARES conversion there has been a drop in cases to 9,712 kids and 4,600 parents. Reasons for the drop may be because of teenage kids added income, child support issues, or pending cases because of verification issues.

Ed Kamin asked if CTS could be aligned with Medicaid on verification issues. Kathy explained that State Statues required verification of information on these recipients. Ed asked if something could be done to change this requirement to a simplified process like Medicaid. Kathy said she would talk to legal counsel in DHFS on this issue.

Concerns voiced on CTS conversion:

❖ It was recommended that training be held prior to implementation of new processes or program changes.
❖ It was recommended that when training sessions not be scheduled at the same time another training is scheduled.
❖ It was recommended that a policy change be made to align CTS verification with other programs such as Medicaid.

❖ It was recommended that there should be a CTS policy manual done, similar to the one traditionally available for MA, FS, and AFDC.

It was suggested that if any county had other concerns or suggested changes to please e-mail the Call Center and e-mails would be forwarded to Kathy for follow up.

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

Transfer to DHFS:

A detailed food stamp transfer report will be submitted in late May with the transfer to take place in July 2002. DHFS has appointed Susan Reinardy of the Division of Management and Technology to be the lead transfer coordinator.

Food Stamp On-line Handbook:

Dave Hippler of DWD/DWS provided an update of the On-line FS Handbook. The initial role out of the new handbook went very well. Dave explained that the paper copy of the handbook is now obsolete.

Some of the reasons for the FS handbook going on-line are:

❖ Time frame for printing process.
❖ On-line materials are always up-to-date. (At first it is believed that there will be monthly releases as information updates will be needed.)
❖ Small updates can be done more frequently.

Dave explained that training had been done for supervisors and lead workers. Basic information required by workers in order to use the on-line handbook easily would be Basic Windows knowledge.

Concerns about having only an On-line handbook include:

❖ The issue of their no longer being paper copies available.
❖ The issue of how back up problems/concerns is handled.
❖ The issue of what happens if there are computer problems.
❖ The issue of how directors/supervisors are notified of handbook changes.
❖ The issue of how "green sheets" will be reformatted so they can be used as part of the on-line handbook.

Dave did explain that the on-line handbook could be downloaded from the Internet and printed in PDF format if county agencies felt they needed a paper copy. He also explained that county agencies can find out if the handbook has been updated from the FS Home Page on the Internet (in bold "red" font it states "FS Handbook Update"), DXBM through CARES, or from their Policy Coordinators. Policy Coordinators were to forward information to staff within each agency once notified of handbook changes. Concerns were brought up on whether or not state staff had correct contact names with addresses in order to disseminate information. This issue will be looked at more closely by DWD staff.

There was a discussion regarding the need to continue with OPS memos. Dave explained there is discussion going on now about the memos. It is believed that the memos will be kept in use.

Dave also explained that on a different ONSPI web page there would be Error Rate data information available by each county. This should be available in early March. An operations memo is due out soon that will explain this and all of the online resources available to workers.

Dave will continue to monitor the on-line handbook and will be the person in charge of making changes to it.

Food Stamp Waivers:

Waiver request was submitted to FNS to simplify child support. Only a third of the waiver was approved. The next question was: What should be done, modify the waiver that was submitted or implement the waiver the way FNS approved it?

A decision was made to modify the waiver request. A request to increase the reporting threshold too more than $100 instead of $25. The modified waiver was rewritten according to the guidelines sent by FNS. It was unknown how long the approval process would take or if the waiver would be approved in the modified version. Hope to have an answer within 60 days.

Information provided on the Able Bodied Adults Without Children (ABAWD) exemptions waiver. Wisconsin has been unable to ask for this waiver because of low unemployment figures. Because of higher unemployment in areas such as Milwaukee County, City of Beloit, City of Janesville, and Racine County, Wisconsin was now able to apply for this waiver that if approved, will exempt ABAWDs from time-limited benefit work requirements. ABAWDs would still remain mandatory participants in the FSET Program.

CARES UPDATES

Jill Jokela provided an update and a handout on CARES. January CARES highlights include:

- ❖ Automation of Caretaker Supplement (CTS).
- ❖ Medicaid Purchase Plan (MAPP) automation.
- ❖ Performance Standards Data Mart.

Upcoming CARES items include:

- ❖ SeniorCare
- ❖ Web piece for child care
- ❖ Federal Poverty Level Guidelines effective May 2002
- ❖ W-2 payment cycle issues

USDA-FNS DATA COLLECTION

Rick Zynda provided a statewide error rate handout.

The next meeting will be:

    April 18, 2002
    GEF III, Room 041
    1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.